

PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION AMONG SAUDI DENTAL STUDENTS

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أجريت في كلية طب الأسنان جامعة الملك سعود دراسة كان الهدف منها دراسة الرضا الوظيفي بين طلاب طب الأسنان المتقدمين وأطباء الامتياز .

تم توزيع استبيان على كافة طلاب وطالبات السنوات الرابعة والخامسة وكذلك أطباء وطبيبات الامتياز . قام بملاء الاستبيان ١٦٠ (مائة وستون) من مجموع الطلاب وأطباء الامتياز وعددهم ٢١٩ (مائتان وتسعة عشر) أي بنسبة ٧٣% (ثلاثة وسبعون بالمائة) وتم إدخال هؤلاء في الدراسة . أظهرت النتائج أنه على الرغم من أن ١٥% (خمسة عشر بالمائة) من الذين أدخلت أجوبتهم في الدراسة لم يكونوا راضين عن مهنة طب الأسنان إلا أن أكثر من ٩٤% (أربعة وتسعون بالمائة) يرغبون في الاستمرار في مهنة طب الأسنان والقيام بدراسات عليا في هذا المجال . لم يكن هناك فرق إحصائي يذكر بين آراء الذكور والإناث .

A study was carried out at King Saud University Dental School to assess professional satisfaction between senior dental students and interns. A questionnaire was distributed to all 4th, 5th year students and interns (males and females). One hundred sixty (160) or 73% of the two hundred nineteen (219) who received the questionnaires responded.

The results showed that although 15% of those investigated were dissatisfied with the dental profession, over 94% of all those included in the study would like to continue their postgraduate education in the profession. There were no statistical differences between the opinions of male and female respondents. Cross tabulation of job satisfaction and taking the right decision in attending dental school, dentistry being the first choice and advising a friend to take dentistry, were significant.

introduction

Dental educators find it difficult to predict students performance during their study in the dental school. Part of the problem is attributed to the fact that the best available students qualify to study Dentistry. Once in the system, however, the students are faced with a varied curriculum content. They work long hours under stressful conditions. Standardized admission tests, like the Dental Aptitude Test (DAT) have failed to account for strong as well as weak technical performance.¹

Job satisfaction has been described as the "positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences".¹² Job satisfaction is an important topic to study because of the potential linkages between work satisfaction and performance, worker physical and mental health, and worker self-esteem.³

Theories of job satisfaction suggest that it is determined by multiple factors including:

1. Work characteristics - both the actual and perceived features of the job and its rewards.^{3,4}
2. Worker attributes - demographic characteristics, emotional well-being, and personality factors.^{5,6}
3. Non-work factors - social interactions, family life and general life satisfaction.⁷

Koslowsky et al in 1974⁸ found various levels of association between over-all job satisfaction and several factors. Over-all job satisfaction was found to be positively associated with satisfaction with delivery of dental care, better relations with patients, and job autonomy. Yablon et al in 1982⁹ found that higher income is another source of job satisfaction. On the other hand, job stress and lack of personal time were sources of dissatisfaction.^{10,11}

Assessing the level of satisfaction among senior dental students provides a key barometer of the future of dental education in any country. Measures of satisfaction with the career a student has chosen can be used to identify problems or issues that can be targeted by dental schools and the profession in order to enhance the level of Dental education.

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Subsequently, this can lead to improvements in students performance and indirectly produce better dentists.

This study has been conducted at the College of Dentistry, King Saud University, to assess students satisfaction and the desire to continue further in the profession by pursuing postgraduate studies.

Materials and Methods

A questionnaire written in English was distributed to all interns (105 males and females), 5th year students (60 males and females) and 4th year students (54 males and females). Nineteen questions were included. Those who filled the form and thus included in the study were 88 males (55%) and 72 females (45%), a total of 160 participants. Of this number, 45.6% were interns, 30% were 5^h year students while 4^h year students accounted for 24.4% of the respondents. Their mean age was 22.37 years, and the mean GPA was 3.75.

FOXPRO was utilized to enter data into a computer. To compute one-way and two-way frequencies, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used. Chi-square was used to determine the relationship between the variables.

Results

The distribution of participants who were included in the study were as follows:

Interns	73	45.6 %
5th year	48	30.0 %
4th year	39	24.4 %
	160	100.0%

When asked about the father's job, the response showed that most parents were businessmen (20.5%) (Fig. 1), while most participants stated that their mothers were housewives 84.8% (Fig. 2). Most of the participants were single (82.2%) while those married were 17.2% (Fig. 3).

Eighty-five percent (85%) said that they were satisfied with the dental profession as a career, while 15% were dissatisfied. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with level of students is shown in Table 1. Chi-square test showed that there was no significant relationship between satisfaction and year of study (p = .496).

When asked whether they think that they had made the right decision in going into the dental school, 82.5% responded in the affirmative, while 17.5% answered negatively. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with taking the right decision in choosing this career is shown in Table 2.

Chi-square test showed that there was a highly significant relationship between satisfaction and the "right choice", (p = <.00001). Seventy-seven point five percent (77.5%) of the respondents indicated that Dentistry was their first choice when applying to the university, while the rest (22.5%) reported otherwise. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with Dentistry being the first choice when applying to the university is shown in Table 3. Chi-square test showed that there was significant relationship between satisfaction and "first choice" (p <.05).

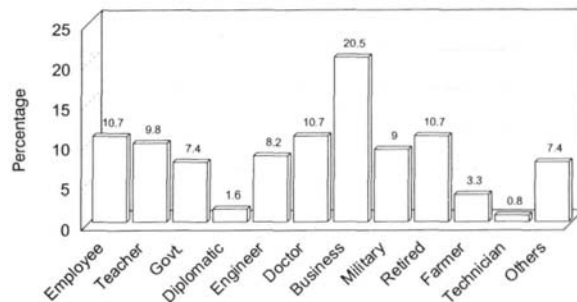


Figure 1. Distribution of fathers' occupation.

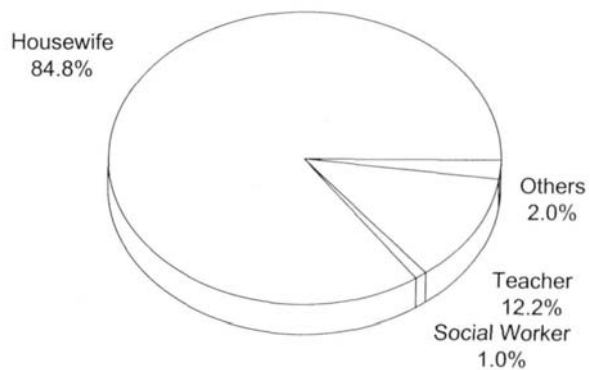


Figure 2. Distribution of mothers' job.

When asked whether they would advise a close friend to choose the dental school for university studies, 63.1% said they would, while 36.9% would not. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with advising a friend to choose the dental school is shown in Table 4. Chi-square showed that there was significant relationship between satisfaction and advice to a friend, ($p = <.001$).

Ninety-four point four percent (94.4%) of participants said they would like to continue postgraduate studies. Among these, 81.4% prefer to go abroad for that purpose while 18.6% would like to stay in the country for their postgraduate studies. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with plan for further study is shown in Table 5. Chi-square showed that there was no significant relationship between satisfaction and plan for further study, ($p = .777$).

There was no significant difference between the attitude of males and females regarding their plan to do postgraduate studies although the trend was slightly higher among males.

Moreover, no significant difference could be found between males and females regarding going abroad for that purpose or staying in the country, although the trend was slightly higher among females wanting to stay in the country.

When asked which country would they go to for their postgraduate studies, 88.7% preferred

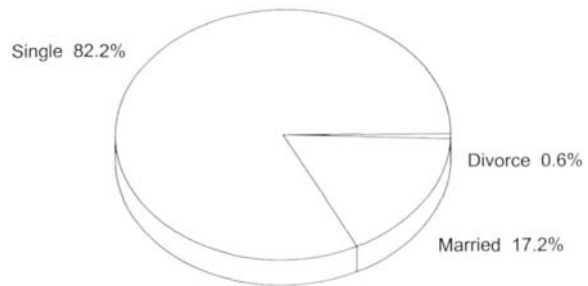


Figure 3. Distribution of marital status of the respondents.

Table 1. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with level of students.

Level of Satisfaction	Level of Students			Total
	4th Year	5th Year	Intern	
Satisfied	33 (86.8%)	38(79.2%)	58 (86.6%)	129(84.3%)
Dissatisfied	5(13.2%)	10(20.8%)	9(13.4%)	24(15.7%)
Total	38	48	67	153

$\chi^2 = 1.402$ $p = .496$

Table 2. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with making the right decision in choosing dentistry as a career.

Level of Satisfaction	Right Choice		Total
	Yes	No	
Satisfied	125(94.7%)	11 (39.3%)	136(85.0%)
Dissatisfied	7 (5.3%)	17(60.7%)	24(15.0%)

$\chi^2 = 55.628$ $p = <.00001$ (significant)

Table 3. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with dentistry as first choice.

Level of Satisfaction	Right Choice		Total
	Yes	No	
Satisfied	110(88.7%)	26(72.2%)	136(85.0%)
Dissatisfied	14(11.3%)	10(27.8%)	24(15.0%)

$\chi^2 = 5.948$ $p = .015$ (significant)

the U.S.A., while 4.8% chose the United Kingdom. The more popular fields of specialization for postgraduate studies as stated by the participants were oral surgery (26.1%) and orthodontics (26.1%), then prosthodontics, (23.9%) with a visible trend for males to choose oral surgery and for females to select orthodontics.

Discussion

Job satisfaction is an indicator of a person's attitude towards his profession and for the latter affects behavior assessment of job satisfaction. This relationship has important theoretical and practical implications. The study reported here was undertaken to measure dental interns' and senior students' attitudes towards their profession.

Table 4. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with advising a friend to choose dentistry.

Level of Satisfaction	Advice to a Friend		Total
	Yes	No	
Satisfied	93(92.1%)	43 (72.9%)	136(85.0%)
Dissatisfied	8 (7.9%)	16(27.1%)	25(15.0%)

$\chi^2 = 5.948$ $p = .015$ (significant)

Table 5. A cross tabulation of job satisfaction with plans for post-graduate studies.

Level of Satisfaction	Plans for Post-Graduate Studies		Total
	Yes	No	
Satisfied	111 (85.4%)	25 (83.3%)	136(85.0%)
Dissatisfied	19(14.6%)	5(16.7%)	24(15.0%)

$\chi^2 = 0.080$ $p = .777$

Senior dental students' assessments of the career they have chosen provide valuable insights about issues in the dental curriculum needing attention. This study assessed professional satisfaction among 160 senior dental students and interns who are nearing the stage when they have to leave the school to start their dental career. They had ample time to get acquainted with the nature of their profession.

The fact that no statistical difference was found between the male and female respondents to any of the questions showed that the criteria for job satisfaction between Saudi male and female senior dental students and interns were similar.

Although the majority of those included in the study were satisfied with the dental profession as a career (85%), only 63.1% said they would advise a close friend to follow their foot steps in choosing the dental school for their university education. This dissatisfaction indicator may be related to the stress dental students and interns are usually under during their course of studies and training. Working stress is a significant predictor in job satisfaction.¹² Al-Qahtani¹³ in a study aimed at investigating stress and phobia among Saudi female dental students found that they were more stressed than high school students. The stress was in a direct constant relationship with phobia and was inversely related to student level. Behairy et al¹⁴ carried

out a survey between Saudi female dentists aimed at assessing the level of job satisfaction. Their sample was obtained mainly from Riyadh City. They found that 75% of those included in the study were satisfied with dentistry as their chosen profession.

The strongest single finding from the present data concerns the ambition of the vast majority of senior dental students and interns (male and female) to continue their postgraduate studies. More than 94% percent of respondents would like to pursue their higher education. This is an interesting finding for female respondents. The most popular fields selected for specialization were oral surgery and orthodontics.

Conclusion

The present study showed that the majority of senior dental students and interns were satisfied with the career they have chosen. A large number of them (males and females) would like to continue further in the profession by pursuing graduate studies, mostly abroad. Oral surgery and orthodontics were the two most popular specialties.

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